Difficulties Faced by the Students in Learning English Literature at Undergraduate Level , Faculty of Arts, Thamar University, Yemen

Synopsis

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Introduction:

Literature considered as an important element of the core curriculum in English language, in the recent decades, English has become an indispensable part of the Yemeni primary and secondary school curriculum. Yemen is a monolingual country, which is dominated by the Arabic language. Arabic is the official language of the country. Though this is the fact, English language has a tangible importance in Yemen. But as a foreign language in Yemen, it cannot be used in everyday life. It can only be used in schools, institutes and universities for teaching and learning purposes. So the only chance for the learners to get exposed to English language is in the schools, institutes and universities.

The learning of literature in the departments of English, Faculties of Arts, Thamar University begins in the first semester of the first year. In this semester, it is difficult to imagine how the low-proficient learners of English cope with the problems that arise due to the old methods of teaching literature: archaic language, irrelevant culture, difficult grammatical structures and high literary forms. In fact, most of the students find any type of literature difficult to comprehend. They cannot comprehend the content of the text.

This research is an attempt to find out the difficulties in learning literature by students of English, at the Faculty of Arts- Dhamar, University of Thamar. There are many difficulties in learning Literature in Yemen particularly in under graduate level.

These problems begin in the schools where the learners study English language for the first time. It starts from class 7 and continues to class 12, the last year of the secondary school education. Teaching English in the schools fails to provide the students' basic proficiency in English. There are many problems in the teaching and learning process. Grammar Translation Method dominates the way English is taught in schools. The content of these courses is based on an alien

culture (Western Culture). According to Hasser, the non- achievement of the goals of English Course for Yemen (ECY) is primarily due to materials used for teaching English in the secondary school, lack of qualified teachers, lack of in- service teachers training programs as well as lack of equipment's and aids.

Scope of the Study

Most of the students graduate from the secondary schools with low-proficiency in English. Some of them join the English departments in the Yemeni Universities where the literature courses are English literature from Chaucer to Eliot and teachers follow the old traditional methods which are teacher-centred and lecture-oriented. The study is confined to under- graduate level at Faculty of Arts, Thamar University, Yemen

Objectives of the Study

The current study has some objectives. The objectives are as follows

- To change the negative attitude of the students toward learning literature-

- To replace the old materials by selecting new topics which suit the students' culture and .linguistic level

- To change the literature-oriented methods (teacher-centered) by the language-based .(methods (learner-centered)

- To achieve the English language needs of the students through selected easy topic of literature

- To help students develop both basic language and literary skills through learning literature.

.- To find out how the remedial course (new materials) meets their real life needs

The Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study will be beneficial in many ways. Arabic students of English language, who are the participants of this study, will get more knowledge and understanding about the best ways to learn literature. Then they will benefit from learning and practicing English naturally and spontaneously.

Second, the study will try to contribute to a better understanding of the different ways of the learning literature

Third, the study will focus the attention on the importance of how Arabic interference influences student learning of literature which in turn affect the process of learning English as a foreign language.

The Research Method

To answer the research questions raised above, the study makes use well-known methods associated with the social science research. These methods are student's questionnaire, data collections, and teaching materials. The research instruments used in this study can be divided into two sections: primary instruments (experimental courses, and classroom reports) the secondary instruments (the tools of data collection, materials analysis, and questionnaire).

Research Hypotheses

There are difficulties for the students to learn literature in the Faculty of Arts, Thamar University. The students cannot understand the content/elements of the drama, novels and poems they study in the English classes-level three and four. Teachers follow the old prescribed syllabus and the same old traditional methods in their teaching. Teachers do not use the right reading materials and strategies to help students comprehend the topics of the literature.. The language is old and archaic.

:The study aims at finding answer to the following questions

What types of literature are taught in the courses in Thamar University?

1- Are the students familiar with the culture and ideas used in these topics?

2- Do these topics suit the students linguistically?

What are the methods used for teaching literature courses?

1- Are they lecture-based or activity-oriented?

2- What kind of classroom interactions are there?

What are the learning strategies?

1- Do students memorize teacher's ready-made notes on topics of literature?

What are the needs of the students for studying the Literature?

1- Do the need of literature develop their basic language and literary skills?

2- Does the course of literature help the students develop both their language and literary skills?

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Tentative Chapterization

The study will be presented in the form of a dissertation consisting of five chapters.

Chapter I

Chapter one is designed to present a brief background to the current study, it consists of the statement of the research problem, theoretical background, the subjects of the study and the scope and limitations of the study, the aims and the significance of the study. It also displays the hypotheses and the questions that will be investigated, and the research structure, research methodology and the chapter scheme of the study.

Chapter II

This chapter reviews the existing relevant literature relating to the present study. It reviews books, articles and researches related to teaching literature and developing language skills to teach literature.

Chapter III

In this chapter the researcher will discuss the methodology, the subject of the study and the instrument used in data collection and the rationale for their use. It will also discuss the research design and the procedures of the study.

Chapter IV

This chapter is devoted to data analysis, and the results obtained from the various instruments used in the study. This includes the interpretation of teaching and learning materials, the classroom observations and the students' questionnaire Moreover, it will summarize the major findings letting the detailed discussion take place in the next chapter.

Chapter V

This concluding chapter contains the summary of the major findings of the study. This chapter will discuss the findings obtained from the various instruments used in the investigating stage. It will also draw a conclusion of the whole study and finally will come up with suggestions, and recommendations to overcome the reading problems that encounter students in learning literature.

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